

NEW YEAR'S EDITION

# SAN JUAN COUNTY INDEX

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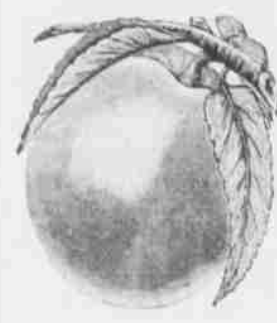
NUMBER 48



## AZTEC, NEW MEXICO

"The Land of the Big Red Apple"

### IN THE HEART OF THE GREAT FRUIT BELT



Deriving its name from a long departed race whose castles, though in a sad state of decay, still stand within a few hundred yards of its city limits, it will ever remain as a monument to that race. Who were they, this departed race? History can tell but little of them. Discovered at the time Cortez and his followers made their first trip of exploration from Mexico, they soon vanished from the face of the earth. Historians seem to think that they were destroyed by a stronger race while the old Indian legend, handed down from generation to generation, says that they were visited by a plague, that those in the huts at the time of this plague shut up all entrances to these old castles and were there destroyed, while those who were on the outside were advised by their Gods to jump into the river and were then turned into fishes. However as that may be, the Indians of this day and generation will not eat a fish out of the Las Animas river, Las Animas meaning in the Indian language, "The River of Lost Souls."

Aztec and San Juan County have therefore been upon the map of this wonderful nation since its first discovery. What tongue can tell of its past glories, what pen has the power to write of those things and times and events of which we know so little? Echo answers none.

So much for the early history of Aztec.

Some fifty years ago some intrepid explorers wandered into this beautiful valley exploring for gold which was supposed to be here in vast quantities. After a thorough search of the hills and glades they were disappointed and began to examine some of the beauties of nature. Everywhere were growing flowers, trees and beautiful plants. The hills were covered with an abundance of long, sweet grasses, which the horses of these explorers devoured with avidity, and upon which they waxed fat and strong. The climate was delightful and to them it seemed as a miniature paradise, as it is now. Claims and homesteads were staked and these explorers settled down to the more pleasant life of a ranchman. Their crops grew thick and fast, they wrote to their friends of the beautiful place they had discovered and soon many more settlers were upon their way to the "New Eden," as it was then called. San Juan county had been discovered and was coming into its own.

The beautiful valley of the San Juan River seemed to them to be the logical location for a town, and the town of Junction City was laid out and soon these hardy pioneers had erected school houses, merchants had opened stores, a newspaper was started and the resources of this place were soon being exploited to the outside world. Of course, many years had elapsed before these many improvements were started, the wonderful growing qualities of the soil had been in a measure tested, the climate had been found to remain delightful the year round, upon the hills their cattle had been found able to remain the year round without shelter and to be in a first-class condition after the winter season had passed. What more could they desire?

Settler after settler arriving, the entire valley was explored in a practical manner by these new arrivals, new locations were decided upon. The great Las Animas valley appealed to many and soon the town of Aztec had been started. On account of its location, many of the old settlers soon removed there, some of those merchants also removed to it, as did the San Juan County Index, which was then under another name, but which is the pioneer paper of the great San Juan county. The new town seemed to prosper from the start and soon quite a settlement had surrounded it, many of these old-timers still remaining.

Situated as it is upon the eastern slope of the beautiful valley, it was and is an excellent location. On the

west the snow-clad hills are ever in evidence and the cool breezes of the La Platas soothe to sleep in the summer evenings the tired laborer, resting him, enabling him to go to his daily task much refreshed. Within a few hundred yards of the town the beautiful Las Animas river ever flows upon its way to the seas, assuring an ever abundance of water to whomsoever may come. To the south the fertile valley stretches before the eye, allowing, as is now the case, a view of the splendid orchards of which San Juan county is so proud and whose products are now so famous, being known the world over for unsurpassed flavor, their perfect color and the wonderful bearing qualities of its trees.

Northward the valley stretches in the same manner, many of the leading orchards of this county being located several miles north of Aztec. To the west are also some fine fields. Therefore, surrounded as it is on all sides by fine orchards and ranch homes, Aztec is to be congratulated upon the foresight of the early settlers who picked upon it as the location for a future city. Their wish is being fulfilled, the town now has in the neighborhood of 600 population and is growing fast. In fact, there is not a vacant residence in the town and applications are daily being received from prospective settlers, who have

built of either brick, stone or cement, the building ordinances of the town being strict in this respect. Each and every one of these store buildings is occupied, a splendid class of business men occupy them, as is evidenced by the advertising columns of this issue. Alert, progressive and up-to-date, Aztec is to be congratulated upon her class of business men. Each and everyone is a "booster" and you would find it a hard task to find a town that equals this one in that respect. The stocks that are carried are a credit to them; you will find in this city almost anything you may desire in the way of wearables or eatables, and the prices are very reasonable, in fact so much more reasonable than one would expect.

Competition in trade, however, is a good thing and progressive merchants will still find here openings for many classes of business. A good gent's furnishing goods store should do well, another drug store, another hotel man, in fact there is an opening here for you, no matter what business you may be in, and you will find here a cordial welcome.

In step with progress, Aztec now has an electric lighting plant, which has been completed within the past month. The streets are lighted with fine arc lights, the stores are now being wired, residences also, and the town presents a live, wide-awake ap-

pearance. The lighting plant is capable of lighting a town many times the size of this one, being installed with a view to future needs, and will be able to furnish electricity to any manufacturing industry, that should see fit to start here, it having in reserve, after supplying all present demands, some 300 horsepower.

In connection with the power plant is a fine roller mill. The products from this mill are first-class, it having been remodeled this spring and new machinery having been installed. The capacity is some 100 barrels per day. On account of the wet season this year, the same in all parts of the United States, the mill has not run the grain, to a large extent, being unfit for milling purposes. It has run successfully, however, for many years heretofore and its products are known far and wide. It is in charge of a capable mill man.

As a city of beautiful homes, some of which are reproduced in this issue, Aztec compares with any town of its size in the United States. Many are the handsome residences here, all of which are practically new. The people are law-abiding, as is evidenced by the county jail, which is located here, this being the county seat, and which is an adobe structure of one room. The population of the town is composed entirely of Americans, not a foreigner residing within the town limits.

Located as it is, Aztec is the center of all the new proposed irrigation canals of the county. (See map in the adv. of the Aztec Irrigated Lands Co.) Surrounded on all sides by these proposed canals, it is the center of population for this county, and is bound to grow and prosper. Water is

the source of all wealth for the fruit grower and ranchman in San Juan county, according to the report of the territorial engineer, has three-fourths of all the water supply of New Mexico.

The following is taken from the report of the territorial engineer. The projects mentioned have their headquarters at Aztec:

"The Eden Land and Power Company of Aztec owns and controls the Eden Canal, a project which, when successfully completed, will be a good example of engineering skill. Water is taken from the Las Animas river, a stream which has its head in mountains 14,000 feet high. The source of supply is thus exceptionally steady and certain. The yearly discharge of the Las Animas River is large and is shown on a preceding page (p. 12). One cubic foot per second of water can easily be made to irrigate 100 acres, if not more, in this region. The main canal of this company is 35 miles long, and there are two other canals, of 10 and 15 miles, respectively. These will carry about 300 cubic feet per second. At one point in this company's system there occurs a drop of about 50 feet, making possible the generation of 400 horsepower, and if the water capacity of the ditch be extended by expending, say, \$20,000, this power could be raised to 3,000 horsepower. It is the intention to furnish water for domestic, fire, light, and

together with the soil, are adapted to the production of a great variety of crops, including cereals, legumes and fruits. Owing to the topographical conditions of these mesas late killing frosts in the spring seldom occur, hence this section is particularly suited for the fruit industry, the apple doing better than any other fruit.

In addition to the above project, the same parties have another in San Juan county which will divert water out of the Las Animas river in Colorado for the irrigation of about 130,000 acres in New Mexico. This project can be extended so as to cover nearly 700,000 acres if the water supply will warrant. The construction of this project is expensive, owing to the topographical conditions, but when once constructed it will bring under cultivation some of the most fertile land in the territory. The other natural conditions are similar to the Turley-Hollister project on the San Juan.

In addition to these is that of the Illinois Ditch Company, or the Orchard Irrigation district, a proposition which will water some 7,000 acres right in the vicinity of Aztec. Surveys of this project have just been completed and work is expected to start within the next three months.

Work on the extension of the Lower Animas ditch is progressing rapidly and water will be turned into the new

government in connection with its Las Animas-La Plata project, but was thrown open to entry on September 1, 1907, when the land was immediately entered upon by the parties now purposing to carry out this fine project.

Aztec is the county seat of San Juan county and here are the county buildings, the court house being a model of its kind, being elegantly furnished, its vaults are fire-proof and are fitted with the latest improved fixtures. The county officials are of the courteous, obliging kind and San Juan county is proud of them. Finances of the town and county are in a first-class condition.

The location of the town, at the foot of the hill, gives it a fine location for a gravity water system, which has been talked of for some time and which no doubt will soon be installed. A fine system could be put in at a reasonable cost and when the Eden canal is completed no doubt there will be one. A natural reservoir site is obtainable within a mile of the town and has been decided upon as the location. Aztec will have a water system within two years.

The water supply is at present obtained from the Las Animas river, which comes from the land of eternal snows, the water being pure snow water, cool, sparkling and healthful. It is run into the town through irrigation ditches, thence into a filter, from which filter it enters the cistern, of which every home at present has one which will hold from seventy-five to three hundred barrels. These cisterns can be built for a nominal cost.

Aztec was the first town in San Juan county to banish the saloons and at present there is not a saloon in the county. San Juan county was the first county in the Territory to banish them.

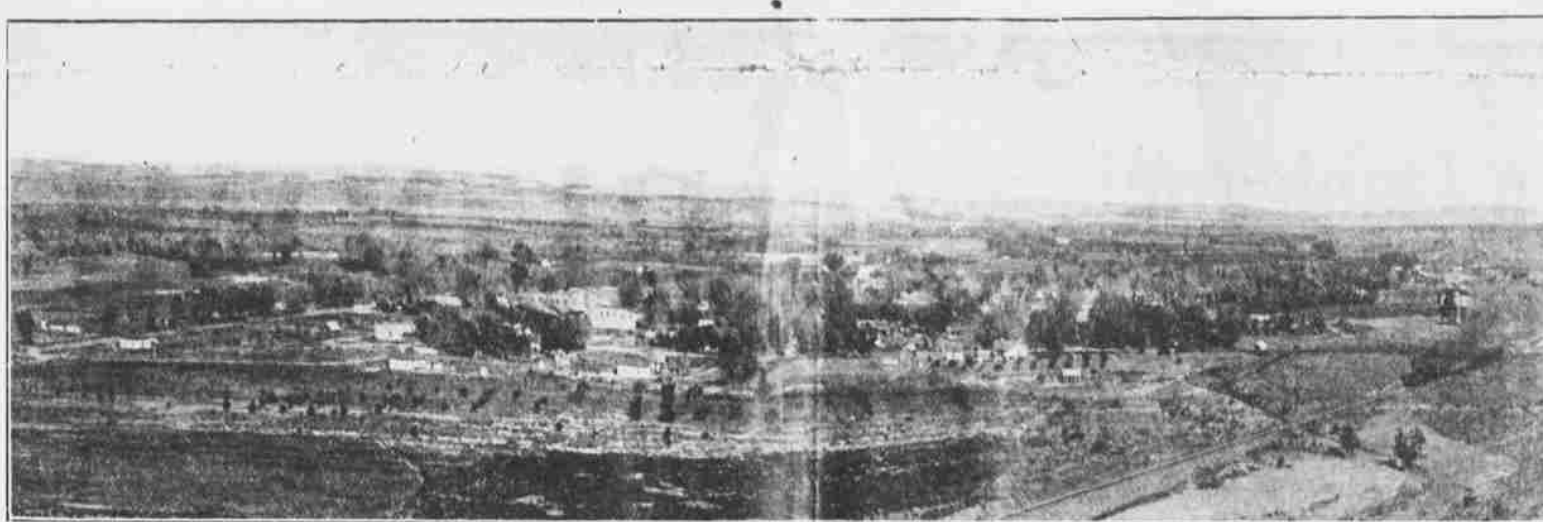
The climate is certainly delightful at this point. For the past five years it has not been cold enough here in the winters to freeze ice thick enough to put up for the home market and artificial ice has had to be shipped in.

In their own back yards Aztec citizens raise their garden "stuff." Instances can be cited whereupon in his back yard a man has raised enough in the way of fruits and vegetables to supply his family with the majority of their food for a year, besides assisting in a great way toward clothing them. People may scoff at this statement, but it is the truth, nevertheless. On request to the Index the name of this citizen will be furnished. From two ordinary city lots this year a man furnished most of the cucumbers, tomatoes, roasting ears and beets for a local hotel, besides allowing the neighbors the privilege of using what they wished from the garden.

Much more could be written about the town, its people, its social side, the churches, etc., but we will conclude by mentioning only the churches.

Aztec has three churches, which are well supported, viz: The Baptist, the Methodist and the Presbyterian. The two latter meet in their own buildings, while the former one meets at present in the county court house, its building being in an uncompleted state, but expected to be ready some time this month. The ministers are all well educated men and each one has a strong personal following. Strong in their belief, earnest and convincing in their arguments, they are a strong help towards making this a better town. None is so narrow-minded but that he can see good in the other churches, thus church quarrels and strife are things unknown. Aztec is proud of her churches and ministers.

In behalf of the citizens of Aztec the Index extends to you an invitation to come and be one of us. The future is before you, you probably wish to make a new start in life, to make your "stake." You cannot possibly do better than to locate in San Juan county, and if so you certainly will be pleased with Aztec, the "Red Apple City."



VIEW OF AZTEC, NEW MEXICO.

chosen upon this point to be their future home. Inside of the past year new buildings have gone up, some \$25,000 worth, and many more are being planned. There is not an idle contractor or carpenter or brick mason in the town and plenty of work awaits this class of citizens.

Among the new buildings which have been erected in the past year is the new school house, a handsome brick structure of two stories in height, costing in the neighborhood of \$5,000, and capable of seating several hundred pupils. A splendid corps of teachers are now engaged and at work, the schools compare favorably with those of cities and towns many times larger than this, the advanced grades are being taught, altogether it requires five teachers to now manage these schools.

The Baptist church, now nearly completed, is going to be a structure of which any town might be proud. Built of brick, it already presents a fine appearance, even in its unfinished state. It will be ready for duty some time in January, this year.

Besides these two above mentioned buildings, many small cottages have been erected, each costing from \$1,000 to \$2,000, and all of which found an occupant upon its completion; in fact, all were spoken for as soon as it was known that they were to be erected. A capitalist would find this a splendid place in which to erect cottages, as it still needs many more here to fill the wants of the people who wish to locate.

The main street of the town (see the view on another page) presents a fine appearance. Nearly all of these buildings have been erected within the past three years. They are all

power purposes to present and future towns. The possibilities of this enterprise are many, and if carried to completion should aid largely in the development of the northwestern part of the territory.

The Turley-Hollister project, located in the central part of San Juan county and deriving its water supply from the San Juan river, is one of the largest enterprises of this kind that have ever been undertaken in the United States.

The records of water supply in the territorial engineer's office show that the discharge of San Juan river in 1907 aggregated 1,475,855 acre-feet, and there is approximately 1,000,000 acres of the very best red, sandy loam soil situated below the proposed alignment of the ditch. The capacity of the reservoir involved in this proposition is over 1,000,000 acre-feet. With the exception of possibly 5,000 acres, all is government land, a large portion, however, being inside the boundaries of the Navajo reservation.

The topography and character of the soil are most ideal for irrigation, the land lying mostly on sloping mesas, with arroyos at suitable intervals, giving ample chance for proper drainage. The soils of these mesas have a characteristic reddish color, which is probably due to the iron derived from the higher sandstone mesas. The soil varies considerably in density in different localities, but the surface soil is never heavier than a loam. Wherever the soil has been raked it shows a loam to a clay loam, with a sandy surface underlaid by heavier soil, which affords perfect conditions for the conservation of moisture. The climatic conditions, to

extension for this year's crops. Headquarters at Aztec.

The Citizens' Ditch and Irrigation Company, as its name suggests, is operated on the community plan. This company is now constructing a canal to reclaim some 7,000 acres of choice fruit land in San Juan county. The water is derived from the San Juan river, near Blanco. The supply is ample for domestic, power and irrigation purposes. The company has a permit to appropriate 100 cubic feet per second of water, approved by the engineer under the New Mexico laws. The canal at the head will be fourteen feet wide, narrowing to six feet at the end, some twenty-six miles distant. Very little, if any, government land subject to entry lies under this canal. Deded lands and relinquishments can be obtained at a very reasonable price, and to members of the company water will cost about \$25 per acre. The land lies within eight miles of Aztec, the county seat, situated on the Denver & Rio Grande railway.

#### Water Now on Land.

Another community proposition is the project of Young & Norton, the purpose of which is to irrigate with flood waters of the La Plata river 5,000 or 6,000 acres in the western part of San Juan county, known as The Meadows. The water is to be diverted from the river by a ditch to an excellent reservoir site, where the flood waters are stored for the irrigation of lands below. The soil is good and the lay of the land, a nearly level mesa, is ideal for irrigation. This land has been taken up by individual farmers, the object being to irrigate through this project. The land was formerly withheld from entry by the